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BRAZILIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

XXXVI SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
IV Committee

STATEMENT BY THE HEAD OF THE BRAZILIAN DELEGATION, H.E. AMBASSADOR SERGIO CORRÊA DA COSTA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BRAZIL, ON ITEM 93 - "QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR".

New York, 22 October 1981

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Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time my delegation participates in the IV Committee debate, permit me to convey to you, Sir, my delegation's warmest congratulations on your unanimous election to the important post of Chairman of this Committee. Your election is a tribute to your well known personal qualifications, as well as to your country - Qatar - a peace-loving nation with which Brazil enjoys cordial and friendly relations. I also wish to extend my congratulations to your colleagues in the bureau; you may all count on the good-will and cooperation of the Brazilian delegation for the successful conduct of our Committee's work.

Allow me still to extend a warm welcome to the delegations of Belize and Vanuatu, whose admission to this Organization is yet another achievement of our common efforts to promote the ideal of self-determination.

Mr. Chairman,

Speaking of self-determination we are sincerely gratified to note that the IV Committee's agenda gets increasingly meagre as the years go by. We look forward to the moment - not far ahead we would hope - when this Organization will ultimately reach the goal of complete universality and when this Committee's deliberations will be closed once and for all. However, many situations of

colonialism and foreign domination still persist: some may be assumed to be resolved in a peaceful and orderly way in the very near future, while others, however optimistic one may wish to be, seem to remain as intractable as ever. In the latter category, the situation in Namibia is the most dramatic one. My delegation had the opportunity to make comments on the Namibian issue during the VIII emergency session of the General Assembly and will not fail to expand on them when the issue is taken up later on in plenary.

Mr. Chairman,

The question of Western Sahara is one that has recently undergone positive developments, as a result of the courage and determination with which the Organization of African Unity grappled the issue in its last summit meeting held in Nairobi. The way now seems to be paved for a peaceful settlement of the conflict that has been besetting the North-West of Africa for five years now. We earnestly hope that the implementation of the proposals by the OAU ad hoc Committee, with the cooperation of the United Nations, will soon bring peace to the people of that region.

Mr. Chairman,

History teaches us that whenever the right to self-determination is denied to a people, the end result, which inevitably comes sooner as later, is tension and violence. The tide of freedom and liberation simply cannot be stemmed.

Mr. Chairman,

The commitment of the Government and people of Brazil to the principle of self-determination has been consistently expressed in this Committee. As we are once again engaged in the question of East Timor, we feel the necessity to reassert our support to that territory's right to self-determination which has been time and again restated by the Security Council and the General Assembly. Last year's resolution 35/27, adopted with the positive vote of Brazil, not only reaffirmed that right, but also declared "that the people of East Timor must be enabled freely to determine their own future within the framework of the United Nations".

Unfortunately, until the present time this Organization's resolutions have not been implemented and the people of East Timor haven't yet been given a chance to freely determine their future. We, Brazilians, are very sensitive to the plight of the Maubere people. We share with East Timor and other countries in Africa a common historical past. Brazil and five other nations in Africa that have the same cultural background and speak the same language have reached independence and statehood and we are now able to participate responsibly in the international community. Is is only natural, therefore, that we sould wish for East Timor the same future of freedom. Urgent action should be taken to enable the East Timorese people to have its identity politically reflected.

In this connection, Mr. Chairman, in the statement my delegation delivered to the IV Committee last year it "noted with satisfaction the issuance on 12 October of a communiqué by the Council of Ministers of Portugal on the question of East Timor". My delegation also expressed the hope that the Portuguese initiative would contribute to a peaceful and speedy solution of the problem under consideration. Brazil continues to have faith in the ability of the Portuguese Government to take initiatives aiming at a peaceful and speedy solution of the problem of East Timor.

Mr. Chairman,

The situation in East Timor is frought with serious problems of a humanitarian nature. The Maubere people's suffering is known to all of us. Several reports have recently reached us on the severe difficulties facing the East Timorese people. Last year the General Assembly requested "the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to render, within their respective fields of competence, all possible assistance to the people of East Timor, particularly the children". In view of the still tragic situation prevailing in East Timor, we believe the General Assembly should renew this request at its present session and further urge those who are in a position to do so to spare no efforts to alleviate the suffering and hardship

of the population in East Timor. We are confident that the Government of Indonesia will express its solidarity with the majority of member states of the United Nations and show its willingness to cooperate in the granting of humanitarian help offered to the Maubere people.

Last year we celebrated the twentieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Let us rededicate ourselves to the principles enshrined in that historic declaration and strengthen our commitment to the speedy and peaceful independence of East Timor, whose people have suffered far too much for far too long.

Thank you.